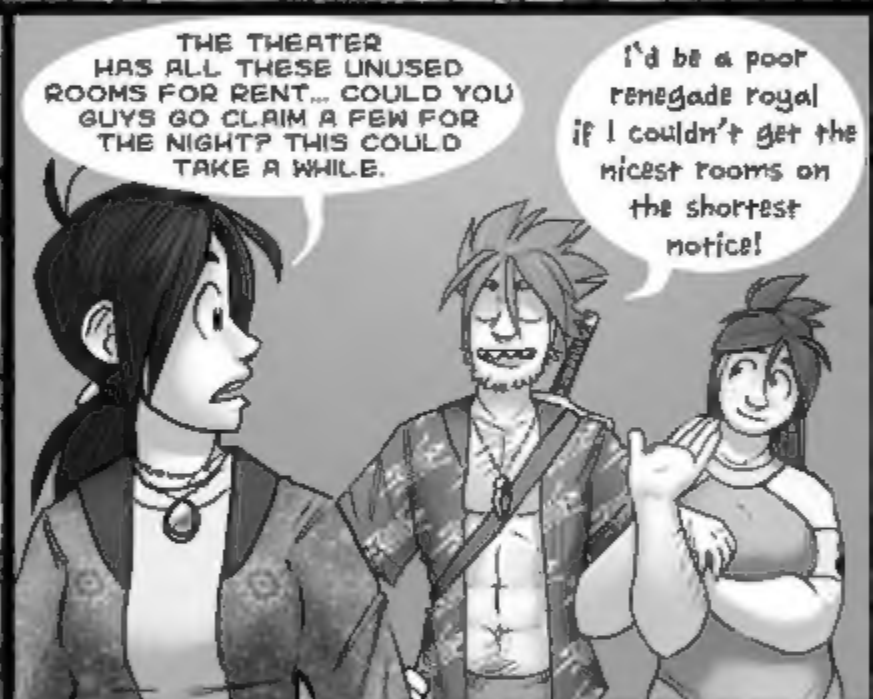






FWOOSH!



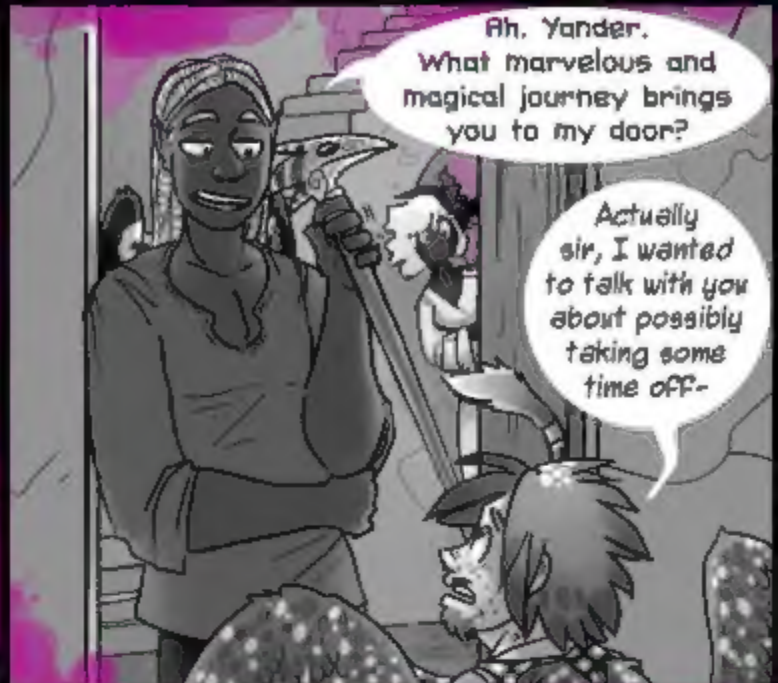
So it's business then? Well come on in, might as well sit down and enjoy a drink while we talk.

NOT TO IMPOSE BUT I THINK I'LL COME TOO, TO OBSERVE THE DISCUSSION AND-



Much too *mundane* and *practical* for the likes of you, I'm sure.

SLAM!



Ah, Yander. What marvelous and magical journey brings you to my door?

Actually sir, I wanted to talk with you about possibly taking some time off-



This is a **business meeting** Padma, not a back-alley seance...

...or whatever charming activity you do to earn your keep.



Now Yander. Inform me what was so important that its discussion needs to interrupt my **very busy** evening.



Well, as I said, something's come up and I need some time off.



sigh Well, I suppose we could use an understudy for a week or so. You're due for a vacation anyway.

It's not a vacation sir, and I'll need more than a week. To be honest, I might not be coming back at all.



Beg pardon?

I understand if that means I'll have to be fired, but this is important. Ananel will take care of my birds, and my rent is paid for the next two months.



Forget your piddly little rent! You're abandoning your job? You're abandoning me?!

I'll come back if I can! I love this job! But some things are just more important than this theater.



Says who?! That crippled hedge-witch you used to date? I'll bet she's behind all this!

Vaniji, this is a matter of life and death!



This is my chance to do more than pretend. I want to BE something for once. I'm going to do whatever I can to save these islands I love.



No, you don't. And you won't. I'm going to tell you what you want to do.

Then you're going to do it MY way.



You have no reason to leave. You don't WANT to leave. You don't trust anyone who wants you to leave.

I don't trust... no, no that isn't right...



Don't listen to your thoughts, they are lying. I am the only one you can trust.

Let my will become yours, and everything will be easier.



I... I can't breathe.

Only because you are fighting me. Just relax, let me do the thinking both of us.

VANIJI!



VANIJI!
VANIJI, HONEY,
THERE'S A
THING!

Mona, Honey
needs you to
be quiet while
he's brain-
washing.



OKAY, BUT
YOU REMEMBER THAT
BLUE STONE IN YOUR
ROOM? THE ONE YOU
TOLD ME IS REALLY
SUPER IMPORTANT?

You're going
to change your mind
and decide to...
what about it?



IT'S
GLOWING.

SNAP!

IS THAT
BAD?

RAM!



TOSS!



VANISI!
WHAT'S WRONG
WITH KOR?!



Little runt
can't hold his drink.
Now go! I've got
more important
matters to
deal with.

SLAM!

WHA- VANISI!
DON'T YOU TRY TO
HIDE FROM ME! THIS
ISN'T OVER!



UH, GUYS,
KOR HERE
DOESN'T LOOK
TOO GOOD. MAYBE
WE SHOULD GET
HIM HOME BEFORE
HE THROWS UP
OR BLACKS
OUT OR-



SMOOCH!



ACTUALLY,
FOR KOR, THIS IS
PRETTY NORMAL.





What on earth does he want now?! Could the proximity stone be malfunctioning? Great starhunter Slagathor, I hope it is.

VANIJI? VANIJI! WHAT'S WRONG? WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID?



Maha, you have got to leave, NOW. I don't care where you go or how much it costs to stay there, just get out of the theater and don't come back until-



AWW, COME ON VANIJI.

YOU WEREN'T TRYING TO HIDE THIS TAFTY GINGER-FNAP FROM UP, WERE YOU?



IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU'RE NOT HAPPY TO SEE US.



OH KURR, STOP TEASING THEM. VANIJI WOULD NEVER BE SO INHOSPITABLE.



AFTER ALL, HE DIDN'T SURVIVE THREE YEARS IN MY SERVICE BY BEING STUPID.

I AM SO SORRY TO SURPRISE YOU LIKE THIS VANIJ, BUT ONCE MORE THE RAVEN FORCES OUR PATHS TO CROSS.

FNIFF

FNUFFLE

FNORT

YOUR RUG SNEELS FUNNY. WHAT ARE YOU HIDING UNDER THERE?

The last person who made impertinent remarks about my decor. Leave it alone.

Snow, you know I am always willing to assist my old captain in whatever he needs.

HOW ARE THOSE FIVE CAPTIVES I GAVE YOU? STILL CAUSING TROUBLE?

Their will was stronger than I had expected, but that doesn't matter anymore.

Thanks to a magical loophole I found, they're as well trained as a pack of hunting hounds. Just as useful too.

But you didn't come here to discuss past conquests. What do you have for me today?

A pack of prisoners in need of brainwashing? Another cursed slave you can't be bothered with?

JUST YOU TRY AND BOSS VANIJ AROUND!

IF YOU DON'T MIND YOUR MANNERS HE'LL PUT A HOODOO ON YOUR BRAIN BEFORE YOU CAN BLINK!



Darling~ Honey's talking business right now, so if you could just go get us some more tea from the kitchen-

I DON'T LIKE THEM VANIJI, DO SOMETHING TO THEM! MAKE THEM YOUR MINDSLAVES OR PUT A CURSE ON-



SNAP! POP!



My dear, you're very tired right now. You should just forget about all this and take a nice, long nap.

YEAH...
YEAH THAT DOES SOUND NICE.



OF course it does. I always know what's best for you, Love.

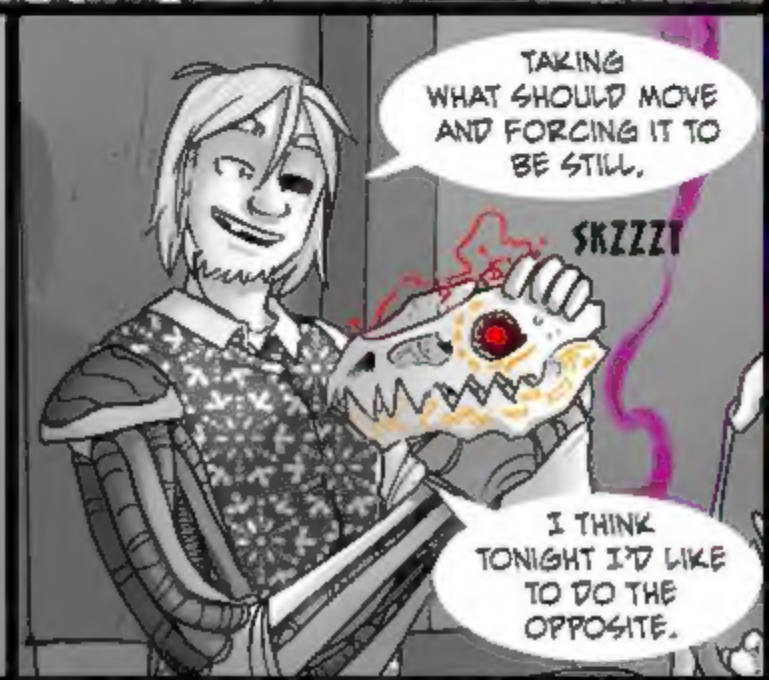
GIGGLE
OH VANIJI, YOU'RE SO SMART.

I never get tired of making you say that. Now run along, my sweet.



Aheheh, sorry about that. She can be horribly independent sometimes.

YOU ALWAYS DID LIKE CLIPPING WINGS, DIDN'T YOU?



TAKING WHAT SHOULD MOVE AND FORCING IT TO BE STILL.

SKZZZI

I THINK TONIGHT I'D LIKE TO DO THE OPPOSITE.

YOU'RE GOING
TO BECOME VERY POPULAR
SOON.

I BET YOU
SAY THAT TO ALL
YOUR CLIENTS.

HUSH. I SEE...
YOU ARE GOING TO MEET
A BEAUTIFUL... BLUE
SKINNED STRANGER?

OH, COME
ON! NOW I KNOW
YOU'RE MESSING
WITH ME.

HEY, I'M
TRYING TO
SCRY FROM A
WINE GLASS.
YOU'RE LUCKY
I CAN SEE
ANYTHING
AT ALL.

Ha! Blue
skinned stranger.
I bet she doesn't
say THAT to
all her clients.

SNRRRR...

URU... HURRY...

...THEY'RE
GAINING ON
US.



VANIJI CAN'T BE TRUSTED. I SUGGEST YOU ALL ESCAPE WITH KOR AT DAWN, WHILE YOU STILL CAN.

DO YOU THINK VANIJI WOULD TRY TO STOP US BY FORCE?



I THINK HE'S ALREADY TRIED TO DO JUST THAT. YOU TAKE CARE OF KOR, I'LL HANDLE VANIJI.



You really do care about Kor, don't you?

AS A FRIEND, YES, I CARE ABOUT HIM VERY MUCH.

The little guy certainly wants to be more than a friend to you.



YEAH, HE'S SWEET ENOUGH, BUT HE HAS THE INTELLIGENCE OF A CROISSANT ROLL.

BUT HE TALKS AS IF YOU TWO COURTED AT ONE TIME. WHY DATE HIM AT ALL IF YOU KNEW THIS ABOUT HIM?



MY VISIONS TOLD ME I WOULD LOVE A MAN WHO WORKED AT THIS THEATER. I THOUGHT KOR MIGHT HAVE BEEN THAT MAN.



STILL, PROPHECIES ARE TRICKY THINGS. NOT THAT THEY'LL EVER LIE TO YOU, OF COURSE, BUT THEY'RE VERY EASY TO MISINTERPRET.



AFTER ALL, A PROPHECY ISN'T SUPPOSED TO MAKE SENSE UNTIL THE MOMENT YOU PUT IT TO USE.